B.C. Jerry Cullen Wash. DC

Poland Case

333-C East 10th Street
Tracy, California
December 7, 1961

Mr. William Ramos
U.S. Department of Labor
Bureau of Employment Security
211 East Flora Street
Stockton, California

Dear Mr. Ramos:

I have been informed that you are trying to gather information concerning the braceros at the Perry & Loduca camp in Lathrop on the afternoon of October 30, 1961. I witnessed the incident which occurred at this camp, and since I am fluent in the Spanish language, I feel you may want a statement from me. I will leave out as much of the incident which does not pertain to the braceros themselves as I can.

After the two boys (Mr. Poland and Mr. Cage) were "placed" inside of a building by the gate of the Perry & Loduca camp, there were leaflets scattered all over the front of the camp, just outside the gate. The braceros had made a move to walk out of the camp a little before this and the gates were closed right on their faces, much like you would a herd of cattle if it tried to stray from the pasture. Many of them were milling at the closed gate, some clutching at the gate and pressing their faces on the wire, and at the same time yelling at observers words of encouragement, such as "¡No se dójen, muchachos!"

There are two gates at this entrance to the camp -- one is large enough for the buses, the other large enough for pedestrians. One of the men came out through this second gate and bent down to pick up a leaflet. Art Williams, a very large man, picked this man up from the back of his jacket and literally threw him back into the camp. At the same time another bracero came to pick up the same leaflet and Art Williams shoved him back into the camp quite brutally, but did not throw him. At this point, around a hundred (100) braceros rushed through the larger gate and began to pick up the leaflets from the ground. Art Williams could not control this large number of men.

Some of the leaflets were bloody. One of the men lifted his and asked me: is this the reason those boys are being beaten? I explained that they, the braceros, had the right to accept or refuse leaflets, and yes, that was the reason. Many of them gathered around me asking more questions about the boys. Many of them had some complaints which were supported by the rest of the men who said "Es cierto, es cierto". (It is true, it is true.)

I asked them if they got 64 hours of work in a two-week period. One man said, "Oh, yes!" But the rest of them had a very strong NO. Different ones told me of the few hours they worked and that despite this they still had to pay their board and their insurance. I asked them if they were treated well. NO, very emphatically. They felt they had no individuality, that they are treated like a collective piece of property; not one of them was satisfied with the treatment he was receiving.

A few weeks before, some 200 (you probably have a more accurate figure) of the men who live in this camp were poisoned by eating allumch which had been left out too long. They did not receive immediate medical attention until they threatened to riot. Some of these men

were in this crowd. I personally talked to some of them at this time: Oct.30. One man told me he had to stay in the hospital several days. He was a young man about 25 to 28 years old. It seems significant to me that they all maintained that the food had not improved since. I asked them this directly. Their answer was: ¡Lo mismo! ¡Mas con la misma porquería! (The same. They give us the same slop for pigs.)

These were very angry men. Very dissatisfied. Their answers were not just a unanimous nod or murmured agreement. They spoke out and told of their conditions in their own words, addressing each other and addressing me.

I have given you the facts as I observed them and as they were told to me, by the workers themselves. This certainly does not cover all that was said to me, but it is accurate. Many parts of this statement, I'm sure, seem conclusive. But believe me, there is no other conclusion(s) one can reach, and I certainly cannot emphasize how little is told in just these few paragraphs.

I can be reached at the above address if you have any questions. My telephone number is TErminal -5-2609.

Respectfully,

Mary Lou Nuibal